



Be Heart Healthy This February

Dear Editor:

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), a disease affecting the heart and arteries that leads to such crises as heart attacks and stroke, kills more South Carolinians than all cancers, pneumonia, influenza, and car accidents combined. In fact, nearly 12,600 South Carolinians died from CVD in 2004 – that is 36 deaths every day and a total hospitalization cost of over \$2.8 billion. Also, with just over half of CVD deaths attributable to women and 30 percent to African Americans, no gender or race is safe from this disease.

The truth is, our lifestyle choices in South Carolina are a direct cause of our high rates of CVD. While family history certainly plays a role, most CVD risk factors are highly preventable. Quitting smoking, eating nutritionally (a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and low in saturated or bad fats) and getting regular exercise can dramatically reduce common risk factors. Other ways you can reduce your risk are getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked, using less salt, and drinking alcohol in moderation.

For more information about heart disease, contact the American Heart Association at (800) AHA-USA1 or www.americanheart.org. Please be smart when it comes to your heart. Take control over your health so that you can enjoy your loved ones for many days to come!

Jenny Sanford,
First Lady

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The Healthy SC Challenge is the Sanford family's effort to motivate all South Carolinians to do a little more to live a healthier lifestyle. The Challenge is meant to encourage counties, individuals, communities and organizations across the state to engage in friendly competition to improve health in three categories - nutrition, exercise and smoking cessation. Individuals and groups can find tips for healthier living, report success stories and register upcoming events on the Challenge's website: www.healthysc.gov. For more information on the Healthy SC Challenge, please contact Meghan McGuire at 803-737-2325 or healthysc@gov.sc.gov.